Private tour operators for Mansarovar Yatra

2912. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private tour operators are also permitted to organize Mansarovar Yatra;

(b) if so, whether Government has issued guidelines for the Mansarovar Yatra for the private tour operators;

(c) whether Government is cognizant of the deaths of pilgrim undertaking the Mansarovar Yatra this year, the details of cause and circumstances of fatalities; and

(d) whether the pilgrimage was organized by the private tour operators or the identified Government agencies?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) Yes.

(b) to (d) The route to Mansarovar traverses through very high altitudes. In such terrain, casualties may occur due to lack of acclimatization against the effects of high altitude and harsh weather. Some casualties have occurred in the tours organized by private tour operators. Government has issued a travel advisory to caution pilgrims about the risks.

Repatriation of illegal migrants from USA

2913. SHRI NANDAMURI HARIKRISHNA:
SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country has refused to repatriate illegal migrants from the USA;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a Bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives of the USA in April, 2008, indicating that if repatriation is inhibited, USA would automatically suspend issuance of visa to citizens of that country;

(d) whether it is also a fact that USA has threatened India, alongwith seven other countries, of sanctions if illegal migrants are not taken back; and

(e) if so, the details thereon and in what manner Government is planning to go ahead in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) The Government of India has never refused to accept the repatriation of illegal Indian migrants from the USA subject to their Indian nationality being established.

(c) The Bill H.R. 5761, sponsored by Representative Michael Castle of Delaware and Representative Charlie Dent and introduced in the US House of Representatives on 10 April,

2008, proposes to withhold Federal financial assistance from countries that deny or unreasonably delay the acceptance of their nationals who have been ordered removed from the United States and to prohibit issuance of visas to nationals of such country.

(d) and (e) It is not true that the US Government has threatened India along with seven other countries with sanctions if illegal migrants are not taken back. The Governments of the US and India have been jointly working to facilitate repatriation from the US to India of illegal migrants whose Indian nationality has been established by Government of India through its own verification process.

Indian land occupied by China

†2914. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after the 1962 Sino-Indian war and an agreement in 1963 between China and Pakistan 43,120 square kilometer of Indian territory is still under Chinese occupation;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) whether India has held talks with China about the illegal agreement between China and Pakistan on Indian territory; and

(d) if so, the facts in this regard and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) to (d) Indian territory under the occupation by China in Jammu and Kashmir is approximately 38,000 sq. kms. In addition, under the so-called China-Pakistan "Boundary Agreement" signed between China and Pakistan on 2nd March 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq. kms. of Indian territory in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to China. Government's position is that this so-called "Boundary Agreement" is illegal and invalid. Government has raised this issue in all negotiations with the Chinese side including in the meetings of the Special Representatives.

Helpline for Indian students in Australia

2915. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether recent helpline assures the Indian students who are threatened to make flow to Australia and an Australian team recently visited India to woo parents and students;

(b) if so, whether delegation was conveyed that a number of students have cancelled their plans in the wake of recent attacks;

(c) if so, whether Australian Government has set up a helpline where students can register complaints in Hindi or English regarding racial discrimination besides its pressing helicopters into service to check racial attacks; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.